

Black Women With PCOS Face a Greater Risk for Heart Problems

Polycystic ovary syndrome raises the likelihood of heart disease, diabetes and stroke in Black women.

March 25, 2021 By [Alicia Green](#)

New findings presented at the Endocrine Society’s annual meeting ENDO 2021 reveal that Black women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) are more likely to experience [heart disease](#), [diabetes](#) and [stroke](#) compared with white women, according to a [press release](#) from the international medical organization.

PCOS can disrupt normal menstrual periods and metabolism; the condition also prompts excessive hair growth. The disorder affects at least 10% of women of reproductive age and is known to increase the risk for health conditions such as obesity, infertility, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression and certain cancers.

For the study, researchers reviewed 11 studies including a total of 2,851 women (652 Black and 2,199 white). Scientists wanted to assess heart disease, diabetes and stroke risk to determine health disparities between Black and white women with PCOS in the United States.

Findings showed that Black women with PCOS were more likely than white women to die of heart attack or stroke in the presence of certain factors—described as cardiometabolic risk. For example, Black women exhibited higher insulin levels and more insulin resistance as well as increased blood pressure despite having lower triglyceride levels than white women.

“Our findings support the need to increase public awareness about the disproportionate burden of cardiometabolic risk in young Black women with PCOS,” said Maryam Kazemi, PhD, a postdoctoral associate at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and the study’s lead researcher. “These findings have implications for improving the sensitivity of clinical assessments in Black women to avoid underestimating cardiovascular risk in women with PCOS.”

For related coverage about PCOS and other reproductive health issues, read “[Study Sheds Light on Menstruation Around the World.](#)”
